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NSC BRIEFING

24 September 1953

USSR AGRICULTURAL ANALYSIS

I. From Bolshevik regime beginning, procurement of food for urban workers was, and still is, a major Soviet problem.

A. During the 1930's, collectivization plus mechanization, plus forced deliveries, plus purchase of farm "surpluses" were not enough to provide living standard equal to that under Tsar.

B. During war, situation worsened.

C. Up to 1949, major foodstuff production not up to pre-war level despite all efforts.

II. These efforts included:

A. Attempts to bolster supplies of meat, milk, butter and eggs by forcing collective farmers to sell cattle,

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sheep, hogs and chickens to communal farm economy.

1. This left 40% of peasant households without livestock and with a bitter attitude toward collectivization and working on communal farms.

2. Communal farm vegetable production fell off sharply.

B. Retaliating in 1949-50, government virtually rescinded collective farm charters (given in 1935, which guaranteed farm boundaries) and consolidated 254,000 collective farms into 94,000 farm enterprises, each including 2 or more farm villages.

C. Then, these villages were begun to be concentrated into single settlements called agrogorods.

1. This meant that farm households

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lost their private garden plots,
a part of whose produce was
sold on the open market, and
which before World War II pro-
duced 20% of USSR total food.

2. This step caused such bitter-
ness that scheme was abandoned.

III. Present plan is, to strengthen the 8,950
Machine-Tractor Stations to become de-
cisive force in agriculture, and put the
94,000 big farms under their control.

A. Previously, these farms were poorly
managed and inefficiently serviced
by the Machine-Tractor Stations.

B. Aim is to reduce peasants to secondary
role.

IV. Until the Machine-Tractor Stations are
so developed, the cooperation of the col-
lective farmers is required, and concess-
ions must be made to get them to work

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A. Concessions are:

1. Reduced delivery norms, both
for collective farms and col-
lective farm households;
2. Increased prices, for both de-
liveries and surpluses;
3. Certain tax reductions, bonuses
and advances;
4. Increased availability of con-
sumer goods for farmer to buy.

B. The farm worker will probably be
stimulated, but the degree of res-
ponse cannot now be predicted.

C. Any increase in production in next
year or two, if any, will probably be
due more to activities of the collec-
tive farm households than to any other
group or cause.

V. As the Machine-Tractor Stations increase
as a decisive force, it will take over

peasant markets, eliminating them as source of cash income.

VI. Peasants will become more dependent, will sooner or later receive cash wages. Collective farms will in fact become big enterprises wholly state-managed.

VII. The agrogorod inhabited by rural proletariat will eventually be reality.

VIII. If goal achieved, Kremlin, freed from uncertainties attending existence of rural capitalist class, will be free to prosecute its external policies more vigorously.